Smith, William

A

SERMON

Preached on the

FOURTH SUNDAY

IN

LENT,

IN THE

Cathedral Church

OF

NORWICH.

WHEREIN

Is Represented the Great Sin and Danger of *Neglecting* the *HOLY COMMUNION.*

By *W. SMYTH*, D. D. Prebend of *Norwich.*

LONDON,
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TO THE

Right Reverend FATHER in GOD

ANTHONY

Lord BISHOP of

NORWICH.

My LORD,

THE *Motive that induced me at this my Lenten-Course in the Cathedral, to Discourse upon the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Bloud, and particularly with respect only to its absolute necessity, was that, with which every man must be very much affected, that hath any concernment for the welfare of Souls, or any regard to the Honour of Gods Worship, or the peace of his Church.*

For whosoever truly understands the present state of too many of our Parochial Congregations, cannot but be sensible, that there is not that regard had to, nor Conscience made of, that most considerable Office of the Christian Profession, that ought to be, or that hath been accustomed, in better times. And then what shame, as well as sorrow, must it needs be to the Faithful Curates of Souls, who as soon as that Office

begins, muſt behold their Charges to flee from it in throngs, as if they were frighted with ſome approaching danger; or to turn their backs upon it, as if they combined to offer an affront to the Prieſtly Function, and that Sacred Ordinance: And which is the worſt of all, that they ſhould ſo often in the year, repeat ſo many dreadful Acts of Excommunication againſt themſelves; which they muſt be really preſumed to do, when they cuſtomarily exclude themſelves, from the greateſt Bleſſing upon their Souls, which they can expect and hope for at God's hand, on this ſide Heaven?

But the comfort is, that malice it ſelf cannot charge the Church of England *with that diſorder: For it's certain, that no Church could ever have made better proviſions to Inſtruct, Encourage and Oblige men to that Sacred and Neceſſary duty. We have not (bleſſed be God) deprived the people of one half of this Sacrament, in contradiction to the pattern of Chriſt in the Inſtitution; nor do we perform the Service in a Language that may perplex their underſtandings, when its Adminiſtred: which the* Romaniſts *are known to do, and which the people might preſume to be ſufficient reaſons to juſtifie their abſence and omiſſion. Neither on the other ſide, have we ſet up a new frightful Tribunal in every Pariſh, which ſhould examine, and Arbitrarily determine, the fitneſs of every Communicant, by the meaſures of their Adherency to a Party, and by their dexterities in giving account of ſome Religious phraſes and opinions, peculiar to their Sect. As ſome of them, that have made a deſection from the Eſtabliſhed Church, have been obſerved to do, and by which, and for their unſolemn manner of its Adminiſtration, ſuch as had underſtood*

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the Lovely Order of its Communication according to the Church of England, *were eaſily tempted altogether to decline it.*

No, my Lord, the diſorder we complain of, and the intolerable ſcandal, which the neglect of the Sacrament hath put upon our aſſemblies, is not the fault, but the misfortune and affliction of our Church, and was firſt occaſioned by an unhappy abuſe, that was put upon the peoples minds in the late Confuſions, by ſuch, whoſe intereſt it was to break down all the fences of the Churches Unity, and thence to diſpoſſeſs the vulgar of their orderly, peaceable, and obedient temper, that they might be the better prepared, to permit, and comply with their unwarrantable intendments.

And where ſome mens obſtinate approbation of thoſe practices, hath hindred the compleat repair of thoſe breaches, the preſent calamity is, that not only the Separating party are departed from the Sacrament, as they do from the eſtabliſhed Worſhip, but even the looſer and more inconſiderate ſorts of men, being encouraged by their example, do preſume to take a reproachful liberty to themſelves to eſcape at that open gap, and do reſolvedly continue in the ſame neglects, without any regard to what concerns Religion in general, or the publick appointed Service in particular: So that in thoſe places Faction and Profaneneſs joyn hand in hand in the ſame oppoſition, and do give the Government the ſame incumbrance, and Almighty God the ſame diſhonour. But the miſchief ends not there; For 'tis viſible, that too many alſo, that are reſtored to, and that do continue in a fair Communion with the Church in all other reſpects and parts of the Eſtabliſhed Worſhip, do yet retain an unaccountable obſtinacy againſt the Sacred Office

and

and bleſſing of the Holy Sacrament; and are always at work to contrive all poſſible ways to decline and eſcape it.

And if at any time they be cloſely preſs'd to it, they are ready to clamour againſt it as a perſecution of their Chriſtian Liberty, and are reſolv'd no way to be made ſenſible, that the intention and proſecution of the Law, is no more, than an Act of the Churches Charity, and an expedient of Gods mercy to their Souls. So that the Curates of Souls in ſuch places, are brought into a neceſsity of this unhappy choice, that is, Either tamely to ſee their Pariſhioners continue in that ſcandalous defection from ſo conſiderable a part of their Chriſtian Profeſſion, and to connive at the Abominable Perjury of the Officers, that are ſworn to guard Gods Publick Worſhip, or elſe to live in perpetual broiles and encounters with them (whoſe peace and welfare ſhould be as tenderly dear to them, as their own lives) by the neceſſary Proſecution of the Law, in thoſe Judicatories, where there is Proviſion made, to reclaim them from their Defailancies in ſuch caſes; and which are the only remaining expedients then to be made uſe of, when all other attempts to reduce them to their duty, are defeated and made unſucceſsful.

Now, my Lord, to obviate all theſe evils by the beſt and moſt Chriſtian method, that (I think) could be undertaken, was the great motive, and main inducement, why I choſe at that time to Preach upon that Subject, and why I now have offer'd the Diſcourſe it ſelf to Publick view.

And thus, my Lord, having given your Lordſhip a full account of the Motive that prevailingly induc'd me to what I have done, and which may reaſonably juſtifie my attempt in

that

that reſpect: I can with leſs difficulty acquit my ſelf for my confidence throwing it under your Lordſhips Protection. And that is, becauſe it's viſible to the world, that whereſoever your Lordſhip hath exerciſed any Jurisdiction, it hath not been your Deſign only but your Zeal, to promote the Intereſt of the Holy Sacrament, and to recover the People under your ſeveral Succeſſive Charges, from their long diſcontinuances and neglects of it. And for this I could offer ſome pregnant inſtances of your Lordſhips care, even in this your preſent Dioceſe, if I thought your Lordſhip would permit me. So that whether I conſider the Uſefulneſs of the Diſcourſe, for them that may need ſuch an information of their duty: or the ſuteableneſs of it to your Lordſhips Deſign and Inclination, I hope it will not be a Preſumption in me, to beg and expect Your acceptance of it, as it's Humbly preſented to Your Lordſhips Patronage, by

My LORD,

Your Lordſhips Obedient

Son and Servant,

W. SMYTH.

Norwich,
March 26.
1680.

A SERMON PREACHED On the Fourth Sunday in *LENT*.

LUKE xxii. 19.

This do in remembrance of me.

THough a Veneration to Primitive Devotion, the great Preſident of General practice, the expreſs Laws of our own Church, and the Prayers that we have joyn'd in, to beg for Abſtinence at this time, cannot be admitted as competent Arguments to us, to attend the Diſcipline of the *Lent* Faſt: Yet ſurely the reaſon of the thing, that is, how Faſting in it ſelf, may in ſeveral reſpects, be made advantageous to the Souls of men, might make us afraid to decline, much more to deſpiſe, this Office of Religion. But I have already diſcours'd of thoſe things, in this place, and upon this occaſion. That which I at firſt propounded to my ſelf to endeavour at this time, was to prepare you for the

Holy Sacrament you will ſhortly be invited to, it being one principal reaſon, why the Ancients practiſed and preſs'd the Obſervance of this Solemn Faſt, that men might the better prepare themſelves for this great Ordinance, at the great and Solemn Feaſt of *Eaſter*; And for that reaſon it was commonly called the Paſchal, or Eaſter Faſt.

But while I was limiting my thoughts to that ſubject, I was diſcouraged with fears that in a great meaſure I ſhould loſe my labour, conſidering that this Sacrament it ſelf is almoſt as generally neglected, as is the Faſt which ſhould prepare for it. And thereupon I thought, it was more adviſeable, Firſt, to endeavour to fetch men off from their diſregard to the end, and to poſſeſs them with a right underſtanding and due eſteem of it, before I engaged them in the means preparatory to it. For which purpoſe I have made choice of this Text which I ſhall not manage, as uſually it hath been, either by making Obſervations upon the Occaſion which our Saviour took for its Inſtitution, from the Jews *Poſtcenium*, or by wearying you with an accumulated collection of the advanced expreſſions of the Fathers, concerning its worth and excellency; or by multiplying caſes of Conſcience, (in which I am afraid ſome men have been too buſie,) as to its preparation; And much leſs by engaging your Attentions to the controverſal points about it: But my preſent deſign ſhall be

to

to prove that every Christian stands obliged in Conscience to close with all opportunities that are offered him, for the receiving of the Lords Supper.

This I find no proof of in the Ancient writings, because the necessity of it was always so presum'd to be understood by every man that bore the name of Christian, that they might have been suspected to have thrown away their Bibles, or to have renounced the whole Christian Faith, as soon as to plead for an habitual neglect, or refusal of it. Not to receive the Sacrament, was all one as not to be a Christian at all, in their esteem; and would have made a Christian as great a prodigy, as he was, who at *Athens* deny'd a Deity. 'Tis our only Age and Nation, that can complain of so many, who, to the scandal of our Profession, have either humorously scrupled it, or impudently refused it, or that are so unwillingly hal'd to it.

This therefore is my Design at present (so far as my present Office, and the short time for it, will allow me) to bring mens minds into a better temper, to fetch home the scatter'd parties, that do run away from Christ's fold, and that will not submit to the Communion of the Flock: It is to make men truly Christians, in the highest instance of the Profession of their Religion; and to perswade them to that whereby they are especially distinguishable from *Jews* and *Pagans*.

And all this I shall attempt to do by my mention'd

method: Not by a kind and passionate Exhortation; the Church hath saved me that labour; nor shall I do it, by suggesting to your notice, the just menaces of the Law; for both those expedients have been found not sufficiently successful; and are daily controul'd by obstinacy, and pretence. But I say it shall be my endeavour, to set before you, such sufficient reasons, as may uncontrouleably bind the Consciences of men; and convincingly prove, that every Christian is absolutely and indispensably bound upon the hazzard of his Souls eternal loss, customarily to receive the Sacrament of our Lords Body and Bloud. And my reasons are form'd into these five Arguments.

Arg. I. First, the Receiving the Holy Sacrament is absolutely necessary to Salvation, *necessitate præcepti*, that is, it is an express command of *Christ*: He spake imperatively, in the Institution, (τοῦτο ποιεῖτε) do this. 'Tis my will, my Injunction. 'Tis not left at your liberty as indifferent, to be performed, or omitted, at your pleasure. Neither did our Saviours Injunction relate only to the then present Apostles, but St. *Paul* repeats the very Institution it self, and applies the obligation of it to the *Corinthians*; and upon the same account to all Christians, in all succeeding ages, to the Churches period: That thus they
1 Cor. 11. should shew the Lords death, till his coming again.

And therefore, it ought to lye as close upon your Consciences as any other Commandment of the

Gospel

Gospel whatsoever: and perhaps more closely, as being with the other Sacramental Precept, enacted by Christs purely Soveraign and absolute Authority. And therefore the observance of it, is a greater tryal of your submission to his peculiar Dominion; and manifests a greater regard to his Person, than can be expressed in other preceptive cases, where our duty was prescribed before by Natural Religion and the reason of the thing.

And now I advise you to consider, what you will answer to those expressions of the holy *Jesus*, when he so solemnly made the keeping of his Commandments, (*Joh.* 14. 15.) the great Test of our love to him: *If you love me* (saith he) *keep my Commandments*; And again when he makes the keeping of them to be the most assured evidence of his love to us; *If* (saith he) *ye keep my Commandments* (Joh. 15. 10.) *ye shall abide in my love, even as I abide in my Fathers love*: I say what can you answer to *Christ* in that case, if among those Commandments, this is especially to be accounted one, and that which is more peculiarly his, as 'tis of his proper Institution, and by his own Soveraign appointment? What? can you think that some one or more of other Christian duties can expiate for the neglect of this, that is equally as necessary? or shall much hearing, and praying, believing, and applying compensate for such an omission? Heavenly Justice admits no such arts of Commutation. Why do you make Conscience of any other Command-

mandment, or think your ſelves oblig'd to any other ſervice of God? why don't you hope to go to Heaven with Blaſphemy in your mouths, with bloud and Rapine in your hands? or why can't you diſpenſe with hypocriſie, intemperance, unchaſtity, diſloyalty, or even with impenitency it ſelf (ſo far as you think your ſelves to be concerned in Gods Laws to the contrary) as well as when you wilfully live in the breach of the expreſs command of God, in the caſe of the Communion.

Shall not an offence in this one, (in St. *James* his ſence, *Jam.* 2. 10.) make you guilty of all? That is, put you into the ſame ſtate of danger, as if you were guilty of all. Or can you be ſo vain, as to believe that any obedience can be ſincere and acceptable to God, but that which is intire and univerſal? No it is certain, that no Soul can be ſaid to be truly acted by a right principle of the Love and fear of God to do his duty, but (as the *Pſalmiſt* devoutly ſpeaks) it will make him to have an eye, or a reſpect, to all the Commandments.

The ſum of this Argument is, that to receive the Lord's Supper, is the matter of an Evangelical precept, of a ſpecial Law of *Jeſus*: and therefore neceſſary and indiſpentable.

Arg. II. Secondly, The receiving this Holy Sacrament, is neceſſary, *neceſſitate medii*: that is, as a means without which we cannot reaſonably expect Gods bleſſing

ſung upon our other Chriſtian performances and endeavours. For whatever means God hath appointed for a Bleſſing, (be they what he pleaſeth) it is neceſſary, (where Providence hath not put a Bar) that they ſhould be uſed for it; otherwiſe the bleſſing is in vain expected from God, though yet we think to ſubſtitute other means in their room. Indeed to hope for it in an extraordinary way without the uſe of that means which is ordinarily appointed, is an affront put upon the Wiſdom and Authority of God. And to expect it by ſubſtituting one means of that bleſſing for another, is as unreaſonable as if one ſhould think to reap the benefits of prayer which he neglects, by reading or hearing. All the means of Grace tend to one and the ſame end of making us truly good, and improving the Graces of God in us; but they operate ſeveral ways towards it, each according to its own nature; and therefore that good effect which is proper to one, we muſt not expect from another, while we neglect that. We aim at life and health, both by Food and Phyſick; but we do not take Medicines for ordinary nouriſhment; nor rely upon our daily bread, for recovery from a dangerous ſickneſs. I ſuppoſe we all grant that the Holy Communion hath its peculiar operation, and contributes ſomething in a way proper to it ſelf towards the life of God in us. The Cup in the Holy Supper is the *Cup of Bleſſing*, not only becauſe it is Bleſſed by the Prayers of the Church, but

becauſe

becauſe we are afterwards to be bleſſed in the uſe of it. The Bread which we break is the *Communion of the Body of Chriſt*, not only with one another, but with God, at whoſe Table we feaſt upon the Sacrifice that was once offered to him for us. And can we imagine that theſe expreſſions do not imply that there is ſome Bleſſing and Grace conferred upon the Worthy Receiver that is peculiarly an effect of the Holy Sacrament? The ſpiritual benefits of Receiving were indeed *obtained* for us at Gods hand by that one allſufficient Sacrifice of our Lords Body and Bloud upon the Croſs: But as they are Sacramentally repreſented and tendered, ſo are they really *Received* by the Faithful in the Lords Supper. It is farther to be conſidered that the means of our Spiritual life and growth do not contribute towards the end, but by a ſupernatural Operation upon our minds. But he that neglecteth one of the means of Grace, eſpecially if it be the greateſt, has no reaſon to expect the concurrence of Gods bleſſing with his uſe of the reſt. Where God has commanded us to uſe means more than one, there the uſe of all but one is not a ſufficient diſcharge of our duty, and therefore no ſufficient qualification for that Grace which is promiſed to a ſincere uſe of all.

We are agreed with thoſe that occaſioned the Sacraments once general neglect, and of the too frequent diſ-uſe of it now, that the Grace and Bleſſing of Spiritual knowledge is communicated by means

means appointed. And the people are taught ſtrongly to believe it, or they would not be ſo nice in their choice of its Adminiſtrators, nor would they ſo zealouſly poſt up and down after it; nor ſometimes ſo dearly pay for it: But then it is ſtrange that though a greater bleſſing is to be communicated to them in the Holy Sacrament, yet that nevertheleſs they ſhould not (without any Conſcience of their duty to God, or value of the bleſſing to themſelves) take a journey of a few ſteps, to the place where Gods Miniſter ſtands ready in Gods Name to tender the means of that bleſſing to them. But then the wonder is ſtill encreaſed, when it is conſidered, that though their beloved Guides have by their peculiar mode of Preaching, perpetually accuſtom'd them to the Notions, of getting Chriſt, laying hold on Him, applying Him, and getting an intereſt in Him, that is, (as is ſuppoſed) of enjoying a Communion with Him, for the ſaving of their Souls, that yet they ſhould not apply thoſe expreſſions to the enjoying of him in the Sacrament; and ſhould not as cuſtomarily be preſſing them to that Sacred Ordinance, concerning which thoſe their expreſſions may be much more properly uſed, that is, where they may undoubtedly have the readieſt acceſs to him, and the neareſt Communion with him, or as our Church aſſures us, where they may dwell in Chriſt and Chriſt in them, they may be one with Chriſt, and Chriſt with them. And if they had ſo ſent them to Chriſt, when they

were constantly calling upon them to get him, it would have folv'd the Preachers sincerity, when he ply'd them with those uncertain expressions of their Duty. And the people might have understood, how they should have reasonably answered such exhortations.

And further, this would have helped us to know, how to manage our dying people, who (by being accustom'd to that mode of Preaching) instead of desiring the sacred Office of the Church, that is, of making Confessions of their Faith, of requiring the Churches wise Expedient to cure their wounded Consciences, and of making restitution to whomsoever they have injured, are (according as they had been taught, and their good meaning had been abused) crying out for Christ, or are using such kind of words, to express their desires of having and enjoying his Person. Could we have made them sensible, that what they complain'd for, they might have attain'd in the Holy Sacrament, answerable to the very terms of their complaint, which hath been always adjudged the proper (*Viaticum*) provision for a Christians journey into another world; We might have understood our duty, and chearfully perform'd it, to the dying persons unspeakable comfort. But woful experience hath taught us the contrary, and that among that sort of people we find no such desires, and very seldom an allowance of our advice to them in that kind. Had those people been taught, that the Preacher when he so call'd

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upon them to get Christ, or an interest in him, intended an obtaining his Love by keeping his Commandments; and an interest in his Redemption, and the blessings of the New Covenant, by their endeavouring to perform the Conditions of it, it had been tolerable. But then why did they not insist specially in pressing them to the keeping those Commandments, and performing such Conditions in which they were more like to fail, than in their Applying or Relying upon Christ? But that would not have served their turn.

Now this strange way of managing the Christian Religion, offers such an affront to the common Reason of mankind, and is such a reproach to those peoples pretence, and labours for a greater knowledge than other men have; and indeed doth so reflect upon the discretion of the Nation, that it is necessary to trace the occasion, how men of common sense, and that have the Bible before them, should ever come to entertain so gross a mistake in the common Notion of the Christian Religion, and of the Sacrament particularly. And I shall here give you a short account of the Occasion of it.

It's known, that in the days of the late Rebellion, some of those men that had Usurped Cures, did not administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at all, during the years they possessed their Invasions: And some of them, that by great Importunities did administer it, did it very rarely; and then they

ſo foreſtall'd it with ſuch frightful notions, that the people (as too many of them ſtill continue to do) inſtead of coming to it as a Feaſt of Joy, and with a chearful expectation of mercy and kindneſs from a gracious God, come as if they were going to their Execution, and as if they were to appear before a a Tyrannous Deity, that had laid a trap to enſnare them to their eternal ruine.

But with what Integrity could theſe men create ſuch an extreme niceneſs and fear in the poor peoples minds, about that ſevere word (κρίμα) Judgment or damnation, (upon which they founded their formidable poſitions) as when St. *Paul* ſaith (1 *Cor.* 11.29.) *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himſelf*: and yet ſhould ſuffer (even teach) the ſame people to be ſo tamely fearleſs of the very ſame word and danger in another caſe, as when the ſame St. *Paul* ſaith (*Rom.* 13. 2.) *Whoſoever reſiſteth the power, reſiſteth the Ordinance of God, and they that reſiſt ſhall receive to themſelves* (κρίμα) *damnation.*

Muſt that word and its dangerous meaning make them ſo nice as to be afraid of their duty in the Sacrament; and yet muſt the ſame word and danger be ſo repreſented as to diſpenſe with the ſame men, in caſes of the groſſeſt diſloyalty to Authority? If this be not Juggling with the Sacred Texts, I deſire to know what is.

Now having diſcovered how the poor people

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in many places came to loſe the true eſteem of this Sacred Inſtitution of *Chriſt*: The ſum is, that if our Lord hath appointed the Sacrament, to be a means of Grace and Bleſſing; and that the benefits of his death and paſſion are there exhibited and communicated, with what Conſcience or ſafety to your Souls, can you turn your backs upon it, would be ſeriouſly conſidered.

This the ſecond.

Neceſſitate gratitudinis, that is, it is neceſſary to Receive the Sacrament, becauſe it is neceſſary to be thankful for the death of Chriſt, and the benefits of it. Arg. III

For as we cannot but acknowledge, that all the mercy that can bleſs us, is wholly owing to it, ſo for the full diſcharge of our duty of ſhewing the Lords death till his coming again, (as St. *Paul* expreſſeth it, 1 *Cor.* 11. 25.) this Sacrament was eſpecially enjoyned.

And for that reaſon it hath been commonly called (εὐχαριστία) the Euchariſt, or thankſgiving: that is, becauſe it is eminently the greateſt; and as if all other names, and acts of Thankſgiving were nothing without it, or inconſiderable in comparſion to it. And for the ſame reaſon alſo, the Ancients very frequently call'd it a Sacrifice: Not an Expiatory (as the Papiſts would have it) for the quick and dead, but a Repreſentative and Commemorative;

that

that is, a Sacrifice of Praiſe and acknowledgment, to be perpetually offer'd up to God for all the mercies, which the one real and great Sacrifice of Chriſts bloud obtained for us. And for that end did our Saviour then conſtitute and appoint it, when he ſo ſolemnly and (I may ſay ſo) paſſionately enjoyn'd a *This do* (εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν) *in remembrance of me.*

And therefore Chriſt having thus once Soveraignly enacted it, as an eſpecial inſtance by which we ſhould expreſs our Gratitude, as we might not before preſcribe to him the means of his Grace and Bleſſing, ſo neither here muſt we preſcribe to him the methods of our thankfulneſs and acknowledgment. We muſt expreſs our Gratitude, as he hath appointed it, or we do it inſufficiently for the diſcharge of our duty.

But ſome will ſay, that they do thank God for thoſe mercies every day; and others alledge, that they can do it in the common form of Thankſgiving appointed in the Churches Service.

My anſwer to thoſe ſubterfuges and pretences is, That though ſuch men have ſo far done their duty, yet not all their duty, nor the principal part of it, that is incumbent upon them in this caſe. For they are to underſtand, that ſuch gratulatory Offices as thoſe, are ſo far from expiating or commuting for the omiſſion of the doing it, in the way that Chriſt hath ſpecially appointed, that (how good ſoever thoſe offices may be in themſelves, yet) they will on that account,

account, not only be found insufficient to discharge the duty required, but may prove little better than unwarranted and presumptuous adventures in Gods esteem: and the person that performs them with such a design and pretence, cannot evertheless escape the character of an ungrateful wretch in God's sight: and so oft as he wilfully departs from the Assembly before that work be done, Christ may as justly reprove him, as he did the unthankful cleansed Lepers for not returning to give Thanks and Glory to God. And his pretence of giving thanks for Christs death, by such or any other method of his own choice, may be as unjustifiable an act, as *Naamans* had been if he had stood peremptorily to his opinion for washing in the Rivers of *Damascus*, to cure his Leprosie; and had refused the river *Jordan*, that God had appointed.

But then the wonder is, that in the croud of the unthankful on this account, there should be so many of them, who in a nicer concern for Religion, should clamour for a pattern in the Mount, (as they use to phrase it) in the regulation of the Publick Worship, and that can out of a tender Conscience, question an innocent commanded Rite or Circumstance, because it came not from the Mount, that is, from an immediate Divine Ordination; and yet can dispense with the most substantial part of God's Worship, though it be appointed and enjoyn'd by the special order and institution of Christ himself.

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But to improve this my Argument in general, againſt all that on any account dare turn their backs upon the Holy Sacrament, I ſhall here endeavour to repreſent the full import of Chriſts paſſionate invitation, as well as Command, when he ſaid Do it (εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν) *in remembrance of me*: and it will be found to intimate theſe following motives, to engage men to the conſtant Receiving it, in that reſpect.

Firſt, *in remembrance of me*, is, as if Chriſt ſhould ſay, (ſuppoſing him in his invitation to it, to have a reſpect to his death and paſſion, that were yet to come, as undoubtedly he muſt be preſumed to have) can you have any conſideration of what I have ſuffered for you, at the hands of God and man? can you remember the bitterneſs of my Agony, the ſhame and ſharpneſs of my death? have you ever heard of my heavy complaint, that my Soul was ſorrowful even unto death: or of that doleful complaint when I cryed (*lama ſabachthani*) my God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? Have you any ſenſe of the inſolent reproaches, the contumelious uſage, the buffetings and ſcourgings, the ſhame and the pain of the Croſs which for your ſake I endured? and then can you think, there is not in all this enough to oblige you to attend to my paſſionate requeſt, *to do this in remembrance of me*, in reſpect of my Sufferings?

But then ſecondly, if what I have ſuffered for you,

you be not ſufficient to oblige you to this Remembrance of me, yet methinks that the advantages, which accrue to your ſelves by thoſe Sufferings, ſhould engage you to do it.

Was not my bloud, (you muſt think your Saviour thus ſpeaking to you) O was not my Bloud the price of your peace, and reconciliation, with an offended and a diſpleaſed God? Is not all the hope of the forgiveneſs of your ſins, founded upon it? are not the mercies of the Covenant obtain'd, and ſeal'd by it? Is it not by the vertue of my death, that I am made unto you, *Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs, Sanctification and Redemption,* (1 *Cor.* 1. 30.) and can you now pretend to have any value for thoſe mercies, or any eſtimation of my death, that ſo dearly purchaſed them, if when I call upon you to *do this in remembrance of me,* and gratefully to ſhew that death of mine, you refuſe or neglect it? But thirdly,

If theſe two Improvements of the Obligation can't prevail, yet ſurely you will not be ſo unworthy as to reſiſt my invitation, when you can conſider, what an eaſie return it is, that I expect at your hands, for all this that I have ſuffered and done for you.

Had I commanded you to commemorate my Paſſion, by Lancing your ſelves, as the *Baaliti∫h* Prieſts did; or to repreſent my Death by cruelty upon your bodies; Had I call'd upon you to en-

gage in frequent tedious journeyings to a *Jeruſalem*, or to offer chargeable Sacrifices to me; You might then have had ſome pretence, to decline my invitation: No, it is only a thankful remembrance of me, that I require of you; and that to be expreſſed in an inſtance, that could not have been eaſier, if your ſelves had choſen it.

It's only that, which you do every day, a ſhort repaſt of the common neceſſaries of natural life. Only you are adviſed moreover, to lay aſide your follies, and to examine and judge your ſelves, for what muſt undo you, before you come. It is only in an act, wherein you may ſhew your greateſt love to your ſelves, when you are about to expreſs it to me. Thus in theſe three reſpects you may well ſuppoſe that Chriſt ſpake to you, when he ſaid, *do this in remembrance of me*. And can you after all this turn your backs upon ſo kind, and ſo paſſionate an invitation?

O Ingratitude without parallel! could you forgive any reſemblance of it, to any of your neareſt relations? The name of unworthineſs was ever given in vain, if it makes not his Character, that can refuſe or neglect that Office, whereby he is thus kindly called upon, to do This in remembrance of ſuch a Saviour.

This is my Third Argument.

Arg. IV. The Fourth Argument, by which every Chriſtian

ſtian may be fully confirm'd in the truth of the three former, which I have deduced directly from Scripture to prove the abſolute neceſſity of receiving the Holy Sacrament, is from an obligation, that no Chriſtian ought wilfully to depart from the declared Judgment and Practice of the Univerſal Church; eſpecially in a caſe, ſo little ſubject to exception, as is the neceſſity of Receiving the Bleſſed Communion.

Quod ab omnibus, quod ſemper, hoc Catholicum, hoc Apoſtolicum, that which hath been done and held by all Chriſtians, and at all times, muſt be reputed truly Catholick and Apoſtolick, ſaith *Vincentius Lirinenſis,* above twelve hundred years ago.

And to evidence, that the conſtant uſage of this holy Office was ſuch, the very Arguments that prove that there was ever any Chriſtianity in the world, do concurrently give teſtimony to it; as being alwaies reputed one integral part of the Solemn Worſhip of God, and an indiſpenſable means of making Chriſtian Profeſſion.

And that the firſt Chriſtians did daily receive the Holy Sacrament, we have the Teſtimonies of St. *Jerom,* and St. *Aug.* And therefore when it is ſaid, (*Acts* 2. 46.) *that they were daily with one accord in the Temple*; the learned Dr. *Hammond* Paraphraſeth, that they daily received the Holy Sacrament in ſome upper rooms of the Temple.

In St. *Auſtins* time (as he teſtifies,) it was in ordinary

dinary courſe adminiſtred once a week. And when the Church afterwards thought fit to urge the neceſſity of receiving it at the three Solemn Feaſts (without which they were not to enjoy the name of Catholicks, ſaith the *Eliberine* Council) yet it was but, as at the leaſt, and was not deſigned to exclude a more frequent uſage of Adminiſtring and Receiving it, at other times alſo.

Thus ſtands the caſe of Primitive and Univerſal practice: and ſhall we now ſeparate Chriſtianity from its Catholiciſme? or ſhall we hope to go to Heaven, out of Catholick Communion, when we wilfully ſeparate from it? or dare we venture to travel in an untrodden path, in which we have none to go along with us, but a few male-contents, that have nothing to guide them but a preſumptuous and an enthuſiaſtick opinion of their own private light? or ſhall we ſuſpect, that God had ſo deprived his Church of the promiſed guidance of his Spirit, as that all the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity ſhould always have been engaged, in ſuch an unneceſſary attendance upon this Inſtitution; or ſo miſtaken, when they advanced the reputation of its bleſſings with ſuch lofty expreſſions of its worth; or ſhall we plead for, or truſt to a Religion, or chuſe to feed on bread made of the Tares, which the devil ſew in our incloſure ſince Forty one, and refuſe the common and ſubſtantial wheat (the True Chriſtian Catholick Doctrine and Practice) that was ſown by Chriſt and his

his Apoſtles, and which have ever ſince grown in the Churches field, for Sixteen hundred years before?

But ſay ſome, This Argument ſmells rank of Popery. How? Is that worn and baffled refuge of the non-plus'd and the malicious, reviv'd again upon us? have not the True Profeſſors of this Reformed Church, done, ſuffered, wrote, ſworn, pray'd, and ſaid, enough to confute that falſe and unworthy ſcandal and contrivement, deſign'd only to expoſe us to the peoples hatred; that when it's convenient, we ſhould once more be devoured by their fury?

But I will anſwer thoſe kind men and tell them, that they are miſtaken, and that the contrary is true. And that to urge Primitive and Univerſal practice, is a mighty Argument againſt Popery it ſelf. And that it's known to the Learned, that they never durſt ſtand to that Tryal for the differences between us: as the incomparable Arch-Biſhop and Martyr challenged them, in his Conference with *Fiſher*. But we are now further to conſider, that this Argument is not only to ſatisfie your Conſciences, that by the receiving of this Bleſſed Sacrament at all, you comply with the Primitive and Univerſal Church, but for a further direction, that is, you are to take notice, that they received it, not only as being neceſſary ſometimes, but frequently; and (as may be believed) as often as they could.

And is not its frequency peremptorily preſum'd

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in St. *Pauls* advice, when he ſaid, *As oft as ye eat and drink it, &c.* (1 *Cor.* 11. 26.) Is not the Holy Sacrament by all acknowledged to be the food of our ſouls? and do not the very Sacramental Elements, (the daily inſtances of common nouriſhment) intimate a belief, that as thoſe bodily nouriſhments require oft repetitions to preſerve our bodies: ſo that which is repreſented the ſpiritual food, may alſo require an anſwerable repetition, to preſerve our ſouls?

Might not our Saviour in the choiſe of thoſe Elements purpoſely denote the reaſons not only of the neceſſity of the Sacrament, but of the frequently repeated celebration of it? I think the inſtruction is very natural.

Why are we ſo deſirous to feed our underſtandings with the word of Chriſt: and yet have little or no appetite after the ſouls more conſiderable food, the Body and Bloud of Chriſt? If the frequency of Preaching be thought ſo good and neceſſary a means for the promoting of the power of godlineſs; let us not forget that in ancient times the frequency of receiving the Lords Supper was as much valued for that very reaſon.

But if you ſhould enquire for the meaſures of that frequency, and how often every Chriſtian man is bound to receive it; my anſwer is, that it is a caſe of Conſcience, that can never be reſolved, but by every mans doing it as oft as he can, that is, as

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oft as the Wisdom of the Church shall think it fit to be Administred; fearing lest for want of such a frequent receiving, as holds proportion to the nature and reason of the command, and the practice of the Ancient, and the Universal Church of Christ, we should not have so sufficiently discharg'd our duty to God, nor acted so securely for our own eternal safety, as we ought.

This the Fourth.

Fifth Argument, to oblige your Consciences to a frequent and constant receiving the Sacrament, is because you are bound in Christian justice and charity, to recover as much as in you lies, the loss of those Graces, and the most considerable practices of the Christian Religion, which were very much kept up, and did considerably accompany the general and constant usage of it; and which are in a very great measure either wholly lost or languishing by its long discontinuance, and by the slight and sparing performance of it. And those Graces and necessary practices, are these that follow. Arg. V.

First, the constant use and repetition of the Holy Sacrament, kept men up religiously to the rules of justice; and was a fence to common honesty, in mens dealings one with another. The fresh remembrance of the last Sacrament, and the thoughts of another ere long returning, gave them not respite enough to hatch base contrivements: and made 1.

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the ſtrongeſt temptations to villanous attempts, the weaker and more imprevalent, for want of time to ferment in. And if any temptation had ſurprized them, they made haſte to reſtitution before the next Sacrament, which as they durſt not omit, ſo neither durſt they receive it, with injuſtice upon their Souls. For they underſtood, that if they were not fit to receive the Sacrament, neither were they fit to dye; and which might next approach, they could not tell, but they durſt not adventure it. And thus was Juſtice and Faithfulneſs preſerved, and the preſent falſeneſs and ſcandalous neglect of doing Right, that is every where complain'd of, may in a very conſiderable proportion be imputed to the ſmall regard the generality of the people have had of this Sacred Inſtitution.

2. Secondly, the conſtant uſe of the Bleſſed Sacrament did conſiderably keep up the practice of Chriſtian charity. Anciently the Holy Table was the poors and Gods Exchequer; the Treaſures of Providence were there depoſited for the relief of the indigent: and good men ſtruck Tallies there for their Heavenly rewards.

And it's obſervable, that ſince that method of doing good hath been diſ-uſed, the Law hath extorted what might have been there voluntarily offered; and God hath ſeverely puniſhed this nation for the want of keeping up that pious opportunity and occaſion of ſhewing a charitable mind, with a greater

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increaſe of mens needs, and with a prodigious multiplication of the poor in all places; that it is now become a burthen and a tax, which might have then been a free-will-offering; and for that reaſon more acceptable to, and moſt certainly rewardable by, a gracious God. And though that pious and ancient cuſtom be almoſt out-dated, yet it is out of queſtion, that the frequent and Religious participation of the Bleſſed Sacrament, doth diſpoſe mens minds to the divine temper of love and goodneſs, and engageth them to charitable acts and diſtributions, as gifts reaſonably return'd back to God for thoſe eminent mercies which they are juſt then ready to receive, by that excellent expedient of the divine charity to their Souls. Neither can we hope that the minds of the people will be ever reſtored to that heavenly temper, till they have recovered the ancient and conſcientious regard to the Holy Table, which is as it were God's Mercy-ſeat where we learn mercy.

Thirdly, the frequent uſe of the Sacrament did very advantageouſly keep up the Divine Grace of humility in the Souls of men. For there the poor *Lazar*, and the meaneſt of the people are admitted to an equal ſhare of honour, with the greateſt Prelate that ſtood by the ſide of the Altar, and with the greateſt Potentate that kneel'd at the foot of it. 3.

There the higheſt Prince muſt deſcend from his Throne, and the mighty General from his loftieſt advance of power, and with the loweſt ſubject, and

meaneſt Souldier appear upon one level, and kneel upon the ſame pavement, ſhall be addreſſed to with the ſame kindneſs, and treated with the ſame entertainment, and with the ſame ſolemnities.

O how may ſuch a proſpect often repeated, pull down the pride, inſolency, and towring vanity of a ſcornful mind: and diſpoſe it to entertain that great inſtance of a Chriſtian temper, to be meek and lowly in heart, according to Chriſts great example!

4. Fourthly, the conſtant and conſcientious uſe of the Bleſſed Sacrament, was a defence to the Churches unity, and a proper expedient that God provided to ſecure it from Schiſm and Diviſion.

Had men kept cloſe to that Sacred tye and conteſſeration (as *Tertullian* calls it) of our Communion, they had not been ſo eaſily ſeparated from their folds, nor would they have ſo deſperately become runagates into the herds of the devourers of Chriſts flock.

It's very probable we had conſiderately continued in one mind and in one judgment, and might have been at this day, ſerving and praiſing God together with one mouth and one heart.

5. Fifthly, As the conſtant uſe of the Sacrament kept up the unity of the ſpirit, as to the Churches peace; ſo it was the moſt ſucceſsful expedient to preſerve the ſocial peace of common neighbourhoods, and the leſſer apartments of men. It ſet up

little

little Chanceries and Assizes in every village, which commonly brought their disagreements, to final determinations amongst themselves. And if either part of the Litigants had made the agreement more difficult, yet when they approached towards the Sacred office of the Communion, they were there generally overruled to lay down, first their stomach, and then their gift before the Altar: And the thought of what they were there to do, so wrought their minds into a forgiving humble temper, that no condescension on either part was thought too much to purchase the peace, with which they knew God was so well pleased, and without which they thought men could not safely be entertained at his Holy Table. And thus they kept the devil of dissention and variance out of their quarters. Now the disuse of the Sacrament pull'd down those fences of common peace. Passions had time to ferment: heats long covered broke out into flames: Families began to stand in a posture of war one against another: Suspicion and jealousie taught them to be unkind; and then little accidents improv'd that unkindness to open hostilities. The places of Judicature are commonly to be the seat of the war. Armies out of the neighbourhoods must be levyed at a great expence and trouble to end a difference, which a soft word might have concluded, and a meeting together at the Sacrament had certainly prevented.

6. Sixthly, the conſtant uſe of the Holy Sacrament, kept up a due veneration of God's Prieſthood, and of the Sacred offices of their holy calling; upon the reputation of which, the credit, and conſequently the practice of Religion ſo conſiderably depends.

For ſo long as the people believed the neceſſity of the Sacrament, and that it could not be obtained but by the hand of a lawful Prieſt of God, it kept up that reſpect and veneration, which the devil was reſolv'd to overthrow, for otherwiſe he could never have ſucceeded in his deſign of confounding our Church, and then of ruining Religion.

And for that end, his Agents were imployed, (as they endeavour'd it, by all other ways to rob them of whatſoever might ſupport their reputation) to overthrow the cuſtomary regard, that the people had to the conſtant receiving of that Sacrament; that is, either to deter them from it, as dangerous; or to diſſwade them from it, as being indifferent. As for the Office of Preaching, which was annexed to the Prieſthood, the people were ſoon wheadl'd into an opinion, that foraſmuch as that concern'd only the information of the underſtanding, they might ſupply that part of the Prieſtly Office, as well, if not better themſelves, and by their own methods. That is, either by reading a parcel of Chapters at home, or by the help of ſome little Officer of the family, who might talk prettily of Religion at the

Tables

Tables end, and ſo ſave them the trouble of making an unneceſſary journey to Church: or they might go to a Barn, where by ſome ſtorms of paſſion now and then allay'd, with ſome ſweet ſimilitudes, they might be better edified.

By ſuch reſemblances as theſe of the Preaching office, the people were more eaſily tempted to think that the Prieſthood was unneceſſary. But while the Sacrament ſtood in reputation and uſage, they durſt not adventure to make a mockery of that, that was always too hot for their fingers.

The ſeventh and laſt loſs, and that which alſo 7. gave a great blow to Religion in general, by the neglect of the Sacrament, was an undue and deplorable intermiſſion of the ſolemn acts of Repentance.

The Sacrament was Ordained upon a mighty deſign of God, to oblige men to frequent Examination of themſelves and lives: and to judge and condemn their former miſcarriages and follies, in order to future amendment, as St. *Paul* intimates (1 *Cor.* 11. 28.) That is, it was Gods eſpecial call to repentance.

By the other Ordinances they were only adviſed, by this they were engaged. The other might admoniſh them, this neceſſarily conſtrain'd them to it. The other Ordinances variouſly prevail'd, according to the different skill of the Preachers: but as to the event of this, it purely depended upon a plain and an unvariable inſtitution; ſo that no difference of

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parts in the Adminiſtrator, could make it a contingent, or an uncertain bleſſing. If therefore you have cauſe to complain of the unuſual numbers of looſe and impenitent men, conſider how much it's to be imputed to the diſcontinuance and intolerable neglect of the Bleſſed Sacrament.

This the Laſt.

Thus have I ſhewn you the loſſes of almoſt all the conſiderable parts of Religion, And (as you may perceive) how the very ſubſtance of Chriſtianity it ſelf was ſhaken and tottering: and how it ſo continues, where there is a profeſs'd neglect of a due veneration to, and uſe of this Holy Sacrament.

O how can you acquit your ſelves before your good God, unleſs you endeavour by your exemplary and conſtant attendance upon it, and a greater zeal for it, to bring men back to the exerciſes of thoſe graces, and neceſſary duties of Chriſtianity, which have been loſt, or impairing ever ſince thoſe unhappy days, that gave incouragement to its diſuſe and diſcontinuance?

And now you have heard all theſe Arguments, I ſhall make no other Application of them to you, but only in the name of God, I ſhall lay a general charge upon your Conſciences, from every one of them.

1. That is, if no man can wilfully turn his back upon

upon the Bleſſed Communion, but he is a Rebel to an expreſs command of his Saviour, as to the firſt Argument.

Secondly, If he cannot do it without a manifeſt reſiſtance of the Counſel of God againſt himſelf, as the Sacrament is a means of Grace and Bleſſing, as to the ſecond. 2.

Thirdly, If he cannot ſo depart from it, but he muſt go away an unthankful wretch for the death of Chriſt, and the ineſtimable benefits of it; as to the third Argument. 3.

Fourthly, If he cannot ſo continue to do, but he muſt ſeparate himſelf from the Communion of the Catholick Church; as to the Fourth. 4.

And laſtly, If he cannot cuſtomarily turn away from it, but he muſt ſo long ſtand guilty of the loſs, or the impair of thoſe ſo many mentioned graces, and neceſſary duties of Chriſtianity: I ſay, if all theſe tyes of Conſcience be put together, then certainly, if God Almighty hath required at your hands any thing that may be called Religion to be performed and done, in order to your Salvation, This duty muſt come under the ſame neceſſity and obligation. From which there is nothing can diſpenſe you, but what Divine Providence may permit to be an inſuperable bar againſt all poſſibility of receiving it. And therefore none of thoſe ſubterfuges and pretences, that are ordinarily made uſe of, can poſſibly acquit you; that is, no exception againſt 5.

againſt the perſon of him that Adminiſters it, or againſt the company with whom you are to communicate, or againſt the circumſtantial manner of its adminiſtration, when the ſubſtantial Inſtitution is intirely obſerved; or laſtly, when a continued unpreparedneſs is alledged: I ſay none of theſe exceptions can poſſibly be admitted as ſuch a bar, unleſs you can be as fully aſſured, that God hath provided for the innocency of your omiſſion upon the account of any of them, by as evident a declaration of his will in Scripture, as that, whereby he hath made the duty of Receiving the Sacrament to be abſolutely neceſſary; or that our Saviour intended not what he ſaid, when he had ſo poſitively and paſſionately publiſhed his Pleaſure and Command, with a *Do this in remembrance of me.*

FINIS.